

SENATE RESOLUTION 7

By Norris

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the administration and staff of the National Ornamental Metal Museum on the occasion of the museum's thirtieth Anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable organizations that are celebrating milestones in their venerable existence; and

WHEREAS, the National Ornamental Metal Museum is one such organization that evinces the highest standards of integrity and probity in all of its endeavors and exhibits; and

WHEREAS, this noble institution hosts its thirtieth Anniversary Celebration this year; and

WHEREAS, attracting visitors from across the country and around the world, the National Ornamental Metal Museum is the only institution in the Americas dedicated to the preservation and advancement of fine metalwork; and

WHEREAS, located in Memphis, Tennessee, the National Ornamental Metal Museum began in 1976 when a group of metal fabricators and suppliers founded the institution; the museum opened its doors to the public on February 5, 1979, when it began to offer exhibits of the best contemporary and historic metalwork, including jewelry, swords, hollowware, enamel, sculpture, and architectural metalwork; and

WHEREAS, since the museum first opened, more than \$2.5 million have gone into developing the property, constructing the Schering-Plough Smithy, the Lawler Foundry, the conservation lab, and the installation of the newly completed Library and gazebo; and

WHEREAS, Memphis seemed a natural location for the museum; James Stafford, the president of the National Ornamental Metal Museum Foundation, first noted the Southern heritage of ornamental metalwork in 1977; and

WHEREAS, located on a 3.2 acre site overlooking the Mississippi River, the museum now includes a sculpture garden, shaded by several 100-year-old oak trees, with works of American, German, and Italian sculptors; and

WHEREAS, the museum's Schering-Plough Smithy provides a space for staff artists and blacksmiths to design and fabricate metalworked items while visitors watch them work; the many items made in the workshop include a sterling silver coffee and tea service for the USS Tennessee, a suit of Etruscan armor for the Memphis Wonders International Cultural Series, and trophies for the Memphis in May International Barbecue Cooking Contest; and

WHEREAS, Jim Wallace, a blacksmith, artist, and the museum's first Director, guided the museum from its humble origins with limited funding for employees and for heating expenses until 2007, earning the museum its international reputation for exhibiting the finest in historical and contemporary metalwork; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wallace retired in 2007 after overseeing the renovation of the third and final building at the museum, marking nearly thirty years of dedicated service as Director of the museum; and

WHEREAS, the National Ornamental Metal Museum also serves as a reference center for information on metalwork and metalworkers; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Memphis Arts Council, the Tennessee Arts Commission, the River Bluff Forge Council, the Keeler Family, corporate and individual support, and many loyal volunteers have also contributed greatly to the enormous success of this outstanding institution; and

WHEREAS, the National Ornamental Metal embraces all aspects of metals from ecclesiastic or ritual objects to architectural and public art pieces, fostering the belief that all decorative metals should enhance or improve the living environment; and

WHEREAS, for its many contributions to the artistic community of this State and this nation, the National Ornamental Metal Museum, dubbed a "Mecca for metalsmiths" by the

American Craft Council, certainly deserves the recognition of this General Assembly on the special occasion of its thirtieth Anniversary; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we commend the administration and staff of the National Ornamental Metal Museum for their meritorious service to the good people of Tennessee during the museum's thirty years of prosperous existence and extend our best wishes for every continued success in the museum's future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.